We claim:

1. A tampon comprising: a fibrous absorbent body having:

a) an insertion end, a withdrawal end, and a longitudinal axis;

b) a finger recess having a depth of at least about 5 mm formed into the withdrawal end;

c) a column strength of at least about 10 Newtons (N);

d) a generally uniform fiber distribution along the length of the tampon.

2. The tampon of claim 1, further comprising a cover forming an outer surface of the fibrous absorbent body.

3. The tampon of claim 1, further comprising a withdrawal sting extending from the withdrawal end of the fibrous absorbent body.

4. The tampon of claim 1, wherein the finger recess is sized to accommodate a user's finger.

5. The tampon of claim 1, wherein the finger recess has a diameter, and a ratio of depth of finger recess to diameter of finger recess is at least about 1:1.

6. The tampon of claim 1, wherein the finger recess is bounded by an annulus of relatively high fiber density, which annulus is in turn bounded by an outer region of relatively low fiber density.

7. The tampon of claim 1, wherein the fibrous absorbent structure comprises a core of relatively high fiber density substantially surrounding the longitudinal axis, from which a plurality of ribs of relatively low fiber density extend radially.

8. The tampon of claim 7, wherein the finger recess is surrounded by the core at the withdrawal end.

9. The tampon of claim 8, wherein the core has a greater diameter proximate the withdrawal end than proximate the introduction end.

10. The tampon of claim 7, wherein ribs are generally separated from adjacent ribs where they extend from the core by an open channel.

11. The tampon of claim 7, wherein the ribs are spirally shaped along the tampon.

12. A method of forming tampon, the method comprising the steps of:

a) winding an absorbent fibrous web around a winding mandrel;

b) transferring the blank into a press, the press having a plurality of press jaws;

c) inserting a forming mandrel into one end of a tampon blank while the tampon blank is positioned in the press;

d) moving the jaws toward a central longitudinal press axis to compress the tampon blank and to form a compressed tampon having a finger recess formed into the one end of the tampon; and

e) ejecting the compressed tampon from the press.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the winding mandrel has a first finger and a second finger to form a tampon blank having a first formed void corresponding to the first finger and a second void.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the step of inserting a forming mandrel into one end of a tampon blank comprises inserting the forming mandrel into one of the first and second voids.

15. The method of claim 13, wherein the first finger is larger than the second, and the first void is larger than the second void.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the step of inserting a forming mandrel into one end of a tampon blank comprises inserting the forming mandrel into the first void.

17. The method of claim 12, further comprising the step of pressing into the finger recess to transfer the compressed tampon during manufacture.

18. The method of claim 12, wherein the compressed tampon has an outer diameter that is substantially constant.

19. The method of claim 12, wherein the finger recess has a depth of at least about 5 mm.

20. The method of claim 12, wherein the press jaws extend less toward the central longitudinal press axis in a portion corresponding to the forming mandrel.

21. An apparatus for manufacturing an absorbent tampon having an insertion end, a withdrawal end, and a longitudinal axis, the apparatus comprising:

a) a plurality of press jaws, radially moveable toward a central longitudinal press axis corresponding to the longitudinal axis of the tampon;

b) a forming mandrel insertable into the press along the central longitudinal press axis in a location corresponding to the withdrawal end of the tampon;

wherein the press jaws are radially moveable while the forming mandrel is inserted into an end of the press corresponding to the withdrawal end of the tampon.

22. The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the press jaws extend less toward the central longitudinal press axis in a portion corresponding to the forming mandrel.

23. The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the forming mandrel has a circular cross-section;

24. The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the forming mandrel has a multi-pointed star cross-section.

25. The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the distal end of the forming mandrel extending into the press is tapered.

26. The apparatus of claim 21, further comprising a transfer rod:

a) capable of bearing on the withdrawal end of the tampon; and

b) comprising a tip that is insertable into the finger recess.

27. The apparatus of claim 26, wherein the tip is tapered.

28. A method of using an absorbent tampon, the method comprising the steps of:

a) removing from a package, a tampon having a withdrawal end and a finger recess located in the withdrawal end;

b) inserting a finger into the finger recess securely enough to maintain control of the tampon during insertion into a body cavity; and

c) inserting the tampon into the body cavity.

5